

Video Editing For Beginners

Make better videos fast

Video editing is a process that begins before you even turn on your camera. The first half of this guide is about planning what you record, as it affects the second half, which is the actual editing process itself.

When you first start making videos, it is very tempting to just grab your camera and hit record. I know, because I've been there too. However for a video to have the most impact, a bit of planning can save you a lot of time in editing.

More importantly, it can help you be more productive in the entire process. These are useful things to consider.

For the entire process, remember to KISS – Keep it short and simple.

What are you making

Have an idea what video you want to create.

Is it a talking head type video where you do most of the talking? Is it going to be screen capture with an intro at the beginning?

Script

Write a simple script, or if the subject is familiar to you, some bullet points. This helps you to make a videos that flows from one point to another.

Video Length

How long will the video be? How many points do you want to cover in the one video?

Besides keeping the video short to keep viewers watching the entire video (an important metric on YouTube), the length also dictates where you plan to publish the video.

What social media platforms will you share them on has an impact on time. For YouTube, or Vimeo, it can be as long or as short as you like. For Twitter the length is 15 seconds, and Instagram 30 seconds.

For example, if you plan to use the video across different platforms, you can cut a longer video into short segments. Let's say your video to be posted on YouTube, covers 3 main points.

You can edit the longer YouTube video that cover 3 points, into three 30 seconds clips that covers only one point for use on Instagram.

Location

The easier place to start is to record in a room, or somewhere quiet.

Plan your location taking into consideration the direction of light, background, noise, and sound. It is easier to film in a location you can control for example your office.

Outdoor shots where you cannot control noise, and other distractions like people walking behind you, is much more difficult to film and is more challenging shoot.

Record what you need

Record only what is necessary. While it may be tempting to record more, more footage means more time to organize, review and edit.

Having a list of shots you want is useful before and during your shoot.

What I have found helpful is to record me talking and explaining, then fill in the video with supporting secondary clips, or B-roll.

For example, in my video, Video Editing For Beginners, you notice that when I mention a torchlight, I have a short clip of the torchlight. That short clip, what is known as B-roll, is recorded after the main video is recorded.

You don't have to record in any particular order, but make sure that your recording sequence works for you. I find that recording the most important section first, which tends to be with me speaking, because B-rolls can be recorded later.

If you do product review videos, then it could be the other way round, where you record all the shots that you want, before the part that you narrate.

Editing your video

Organize your files

Now that you have most if not all your shots, the first thing to do is to organize the video, and audio files. Take the time to name each file. This is especially important if you record your audio separately from your video.

If you plan to have any static images, place them in the respective folders too.

Review the video clips

This is the stage to review what you have shot. I usually pick the best clip to begin with after I review to form the foundation of the video.

Among the things I look for:-

- did I say something wrong, or miss anything out in the video
- are there too many mistakes that perhaps re-recording is better and faster than trying to edit out all the mistakes
- which parts can be covered over with B-roll, and what I need to re-shoot.

Enhancing the audio

Most of the time, the audio needs a bit of tweaking to sound good. Whether it is a screen capture recording where the audio is recorded together with the video, or a recording where the audio is recorded separately, I find that the audio needs some tweaking for it to sound its best.

I use a software call Audacity to enhance the audio. So, I usually do this step after I know which clip I'll be using. This step is done before I import the files into my video editing software.

First edit

At this stage, the video and audio clips is imported into my video editor. I use Shotcut, which is a free video editor that I found to work well. There are other video editors as well.

If you want to make really simple videos without much editing, you can also use Avidemux to just trim of the start and end of your video.

If you plan to include B-Rolls, photos, text into your videos, you will need to use a proper video editor. This is where you want to put your video clips in the right sequence so that things flow smoothly.

Final touches

Here is where you add transitions, enhance it with text, B-roll, adjust the white balance, and color correction.

You can also add music to the entire video, or perhaps just to the start and end of the video.

If it makes sense, you can add extra sound effects perhaps like beeps, rings, etc depending on the type of video you are making.

Different versions

Save your work, and export it. You may want to create different versions of the same video. For example, if you plan to use the video as part of a course, or to be promoted at different platforms, then you can cut the video into shorter sections.

One version may have introduction branding, while the shorter ones on say Instagram are kept short to keep within the time limit.

Tools

These are tools you can use for your editing.

Video Editing Software

- [Avidemux](#) – basic video editor for trimming without re-encoding
- [Shotcut](#) – free cross platform video editing software
- [Screenflow](#) – screen capture and video editing for OS X
- [Camtasia](#) – screen capture and video editing suite
- [Audacity](#) – audio editor
- [Screencast-o-matic](#) – free or low priced screen capture software